

# How Christians Should Handle Suffering

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Preacher: David Antwi

[ 0 : 00 ] Welcome. Thank you for choosing to listen to another word-filled message by David Etchie. Preaching is the means by which God manifests His word and nourishes our spirits.

May the life of God enter into you and you as you listen to this message. Be blessed. In 1 Peter chapter 4, verse 12, in our previous session we finished with verse 11.

Let's go to verse 12. It says, Behold, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happen to you.

But rejoice inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's suffering, that when His glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.

But if ye are reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye for the spirit of glory and of God rests upon you.

[ 1 : 01 ] On their part He is evil spoken of, but on your part He is glorified. But let none of you suffer as a murderer or as a thief or as an evildoer or as a busybody in other men's matters.

Yet, if anyone suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God on this behalf. Here ends the reading of God's holy word. Amen.

Right. We thank you, Lord, that your word is coming to change our story in Jesus' name. Amen. Now, this is so packed, you know. I just love the scriptures because every page of the scripture is shouting out loud to change your story and to bring a transformation in our lives.

In chapter 4, from verse 1 to 11, it's actually addressed how we should prepare to suffer and talk about three types of time. Our time on earth as a Christian, your time, I mentioned in the previous teaching, your time, how you handle time, because you are going to give an account to God.

Prepare to meet your God. And then secondly, unbelievers, whether they believe or not, they are also going to meet God. So we should use the time to try and get them to Christ before they die, because they are also going to meet God.

[ 2 : 21 ] And then thirdly, the entire church will face Jesus. Jesus is coming for the entire church, so we should be prepared for the coming of our Lord Jesus. There are three types or three kinds of categories of times that has been represented.

And because Jesus is coming, because the end is near, he asks, he encourages us to pray fervently, walk in love, practice hospitality, and minister to one another based on the giftings God has given us.

And in verse 11, he says that if any man speaks, let him speak of the oracle of God. If any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God, that's so beautiful.

So even the ability to do the work of God, to minister to people is an ability that God gives. God is the one who gives us the enablement to do what I'm doing.

It's God who gives me the ability. It's not because of natural intelligence. It's not because of personality. It's not because of training. It's not because of just exposure, natural exposure.

[ 3 : 23 ] But it's mainly because of an ability that God has endowed me with to do whatever you are doing. He said, anything you do, do it as of the ability which God gives.

Father gives, God supplies, God has given us, God has supplied us with this ability with which we do the work of God. And it talks about how God has given, that God in all things may be glorified.

So at the end of the day, it's God who takes the glory. Watch this. How is he going to be glorified? Not through my preaching. Okay. Not through my ability. Not through your actions.

Not through your body per se, but God is glorified through Christ. So then what does that mean? My preaching should be projecting Christ so that God can be glorified through Christ.

Whatever we do in church, in the body of Christ, it's supposed to be serving people with Christ, presenting Christ so that God gets glorified through Christ. God cannot be glorified through me.

[ 4 : 26 ] God cannot be glorified through my singing, through my preaching, through my good behavior, through my nice behavior. He actually gets glorified through Christ. But my good behavior is supposed, watch this, it's very important.

My good behavior, our good behavior, it's supposed to be displaying Christ. So if our good behavior is just displaying how nice we are, God doesn't get glorified. If our good behavior is to show that I can also do this, I can also, people should see that, you know, I'm a kind person.

Your kind person, being a kind person does not necessarily bring people to Christ. It is the Christ that we demonstrate through our kindness is what is able to bring people to Christ.

So that is why it said, be prepared to give an answer to anyone who asks you for the hope that is in you. Chapter 3, verse 15. It said, be prepared because we must do it with Christ on our minds.

Everything we do, it should be Christ-centered. Your ministry, pastor. Your ministry, minister. Your service in church. Your behavior in your neighborhood. Whatever you want to give sandwiches, as you are giving sandwiches, make sure that it is Christ that is being projected.

[ 5 : 35 ] You are drawing them to the fact that you are doing this because of Christ. Not because you are a nice person, but because of Christ. You forgive people because of Christ. You use hospitality because of Christ.

And once we do that, the Christ that we project is the only one through whom God is glorified. That in all things, God will be glorified. Yes, it's right in your Bible. In all things, that God may be glorified through Christ to whom be praised and dominion forever and ever.

Then he says, amen. Then he said, beloved. He uses a term of endearment. You are so close to my heart. I love you. And watch this. That is the word God used for his son when he was being baptized in Matthew chapter 3.

He said, this is my beloved son in whom I'm well. So it's a word that God uses for Christ. So long as the intra-Trinitarian love is concerned. The love the father has for the son.

He said, my beloved. And then on the Mount of Transfiguration in Matthew chapter 17, he said, my beloved son. And so it's a term God used for Christ. Now, because we are in Christ and we are following Christ, we also become beneficiaries and bona fide partakers of that term.

[ 6 : 50 ] So Peter says, my beloved, my beloved. When you are in Christ, Bible says you have been accepted in the beloved. Ephesians chapter 1, we have been accepted in the beloved.

You have been. You are part of those who are specially loved. You are the beloved of God. You are the apple of God's eye. You are the object of God's love. Hallelujah. Praise God.

There is love that God has for his people, which is not the same as the love God has for the world. God is love, but his love is for his people. So it's very important to understand that we are the beloved of God and not those in the category of the wrath of God or those who God's wrath is upon. Now, he said, beloved. This is interesting. Beloved. The way you think. You remember chapter 4, verse 1, he said that for as much as Christ has suffered for us in the flesh, likewise, you should have the same mind.

All right. So we have to have this same mind. And it talks about arm yourself with the same mind. It's a terminology of warfare.

[ 8 : 00 ] Arm yourself with the same mind. Like I've seen it as one. Arm yourself likewise with the same mind. It's a mindset ready for all.

Now, here, verse 12, it says that, beloved, think your mindset. Think. Think. Think. The way you are thinking. Think it not strange concerning fiery trial.

Fiery trial. He said, don't think. What kind of fiery trial? Watch this. Think it not strange concerning fiery trial, which is to try you. What? Don't think there is something strange happening to you.

It's normal. What is he trying to say? It's normal to suffer trial? It's normal to go through fiery trial? He said, don't think it's strange.

Don't assume that something, what am I going through all that? Well, one good thing has happened. We are quick to assume. Thank you, Lord. I got a job. If you lose your job.

[ 8 : 59 ] God, why? God, why? God, why? He says that, don't think. It's not strange for you to, for us a believer, as a Christian, it's not strange to go through trial or to go through some difficult path.

Now, this is what I want us to understand. We have to know about, these are things that we have to know. Before I even mention, like, okay, what things that we have to know about suffering if you're a believer?

You just have to know this about suffering. Number one, suffering is real. Listen, suffering is real. When you sit on a pin, you feel like you sat on something. When you step on fire, suffering is real. All right? Suffering is real. It's not pleasant and it's real. And in fact, let me mention this. The things that, you see, there are some false realities that have been projected on Christianity.

For it's unbiblical realities. It's not real. There are some things that are not real. They are false expectations. Unbiblical and unrealistic expectations of Christians.

[10:02] Some unrealistic. It's not real for a Christian to think. This is, I'm going to show you a few things I've written down. Some things that some people say, when you're a Christian, it shouldn't happen to you.

But that's not real. That is unbiblical. What are some of the unbiblical, false, unbiblical, unrealistic expectations for Christians?

Number one, that all Christians will have happy marriage. No. There are Christians who are married and they are always in trouble. Why? Why shouldn't they have happy marriage?

Because marriage is based on your behavior and the person you have married, your adjustment. There are things you have to do. So there are people who are not believers. They are not Christians, but they have happier marriages than some people who are Christians.

So being a Christian doesn't mean you always have a happy marriage. It means that you have the set of tools to use to get a happy marriage, but it doesn't mean you use it. All right?

[10:59] And the other false expectation is that Christians don't get tired or discouraged. When you're a Christian, you'll be tired. You'll be, no, no, no, no, no. We always, you always, you're just an ordinary human being who will get tired.

And that's why the Bible always encourages us. Be strong. Be strong. Be strong. The Bible keeps encouraging us because there are times as a Christian, you might be discouraged, especially when you are a church worker.

And there are times, situations will happen in your life that discourages you. You are thinking that maybe God has abandoned me or something.

This is, this is, well, listen, it's called life. We go through life just as all other people go through life. So we will go through the pain others go through.

However, we have Christ to help us go through that pain and end up working for us. Okay? So the second false or realistic expectation is that you don't get tired or we don't get discouraged.

[12:07] And then another unrealistic expectation is that Christians are always, you, when you're a Christian, you always be motivated to love, to pray, and to serve Christ. There are times you just are not motivated to serve Him.

There are times you are not motivated to pray. There are a lot of Christian leaders, pastors who don't pray. There are a lot of Christian active, Christian ministers, or Christian brothers and sisters who sometimes are just, I'm not in a mood to pray.

I just, you're just so, there are times you'll be demotivated to pray. There are times you'll be, you'll feel like you are not, we are not really working in love towards Christ. We are supposed to, but there are times you just are not motivated to.

There are times you are not motivated to serve and to worship. There are times you are not motivated to even go to church. That's why the lockdown, some people are very happy that, oh, I'm not even going to church.

That's better for me. And now that the lockdown is being lifted, some people are very worried that, oh, I'm going to go to church. It's normal. If you are not motivated at times, it doesn't mean you are not a Christian.

[13:09] All right? But you have to do what you got to do. Like I said last time, you have to face facts or take responsibility. You only don't do things when they are convenient. So number one, Christian marriages are always happy.

Number two, we don't get tired or discouraged. Number three, we are always motivated. No, that's not true. That's false. Number four, we are safer, healthier, and wealthier.

No. Christians are not necessarily wealthier. Christians are not necessarily safer. When 9-11 broke, the building broke down. All right? There are Christians inside it.

So being a Christian doesn't mean you are necessarily safer. Just that you have to trust God and let God lead you to take certain steps and do what you got to do. And then the next point is for Christians, this is a very false expectation that when you are a Christian.

When I got born again, I thought the more you grow in the Lord, this thing. He said, no longer, Christians no longer struggle with sin, doubt, or fear.

[14:17] Sometimes when you are not a Christian, you think Christians don't struggle with doubt, sin, and fear. So you become one and you realize, why? I've been a Christian all these years, 15 years, and still there are some things that I struggle with.

It's called life. It's called humanity. All right? So these are not real expectations. But these are things that others go through. We also go through, but we have Christ on our side.

I can do all things through Christ. That is why the Holy Spirit is always there as a standby, and we have to draw on the strength from the Holy Spirit. There are also Christians, the one and other false expectations, Christians don't feel pain, or they feel pain less because Christ is in us.

So we feel pain less. No, no, no, no. A few years ago, the guys in church decided we should go and play some football. I went. I twisted my ankle. It was as painful as when I was an unbeliever and I hurt myself.

Okay? So it's like a Christian footballer twisting his ankle will not feel the pain less than an unbeliever footballer twisting his ankle. That's what I'm trying to say. We don't feel pain less, but we have Christ to take us, see us through.

[15:22] He said, yeah, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil. And then finally, it's wrong expectation or unbiblical expectation that Christians should need no medication.

Some people say, well, if you're a Christian, you don't need any medication. You just, if you are just trusting Christ, you don't need medication. Listen, medication is putting in substances, a chemical in your system based on prescription.

That will help you. So if you are in pain and you take the painkiller, it's meant to deal with where the pain is. It's targeted pain. If you load a lot of sugar into your system, you will have problems with your health.

When an unbeliever does that, you also have problems with your health. So it doesn't mean, the believer's body is not really different from the unbeliever's body. It's our faith that is different from, so we face life with a certain understanding.

That is life. But in all these things, we learn how to trust God. We learn how to trust God to see us through. There are times where a believer will lose his job and an unbeliever rather gets promoted.

[16:26] So don't let us fret and use the, the fact that you are a Christian doesn't mean life is just going to be a utopia or everything is going to be a wonderland.

Everything is going to be wonderful, peaceful, or paradise. No, it's not necessarily so. Why? Why does these things happen like that?

Because we are still living in the fallen world. So one of the reasons why Christians may go through all these difficulties and challenges will come to us is because we live in a fallen world.

Now, watch this. There are things as you grow, even as I'm growing as a Christian, I find that this is a mystery. Mystery. There are things I don't understand.

Even though I'm growing my understanding in God, there are still things that I don't understand.

Why is this happening? How can this be? It's because we are living in a fallen world. It's called life.

[17:24] It's called life. There are all kinds of contradictions in life that sometimes as you grow, but we will understand one day when we meet Christ. But you know, some of the contradiction is that we love Jesus and yet we struggle with the flesh.

Hello? You actually love Jesus, but sometimes this flesh is troubling you. It's like how? We love Jesus and yet we struggle with the flesh. We have faith and yet we struggle with doubts.

At times you have faith, but sometimes you are wondering, oh, why? I can't believe. No, you believe in Christ, but there are times we struggle with doubts. We have been forgiven, but we are also not wholly free from sin.

We discover the truth, but still have many questions. We have found the truth of God's word. We have the truth, but we still have many questions.

It's the contradictions of life. And sometimes as we grow, as we walk with Christ systematically, step by step, some of them will get clarified. And then other questions still come.

[18:25] You are knowing the truth, but still having more questions. And then also we experience God's comfort, but we still feel, we also feel the pain of our failures and our own lust.

Even though we experience God's comfort, we still at times feel the pain of our failures. So that is life. So Christians, as long as we are in the flesh, we will go through certain difficulties. We will go through certain challenges. We will go through certain things. And sometimes it even feels like, where is God? This thing hurts too much. Where is God when it hurts? Where is God when it hurts?

We have to have a holistic understanding of suffering as Christians. Now, so what we have to know about suffering, number one, suffering is real.

Number two, suffering comes in all shapes and all forms. 1 Peter 1, verse 6 says that when you fall into diverse kinds of trials, suffering comes in all shapes, all forms.

[ 19 : 27 ] Sometimes you don't even expect by the time you realize it's coming from here. It's like this. Sufferings come in all shapes, all forms. And then number three, suffering is inevitably limited.

In 2 Corinthians 4, when you look at verse 15, 2 Corinthians 4, reading all the way from verse 14, it says that, For all things are yours, and that the abundance of grace might, through the task given of many, redound to the glory of God.

Verse 16, for which cause we faint not, but though our outward man perishes, yet our inward man is redeemed day by day.

For our light affliction, watch this, our light affliction, which is bad for a moment, is working for us. So it's not eternal. Sufferings are inevitably limited.

It has a limit. It can go on and on. It has a limit. It has a limit. It said it's working for us. So suffering has a limit. Let's quickly go to the next point about suffering.

[ 20 : 36 ] We got to know about suffering. God is there in the reality of suffering. Suffering is so real, but the good news is that God is still with us, even in the reality of suffering.

Hallelujah! In Exodus, it says that God said, I've seen the affliction of my people. I've seen the affliction. I've seen their frustration, and I'm coming to help them. Their afflictions, their sufferings, God noticed it because he's with them.

His name is Emmanuel. Matthew chapter 1, verse 23 said, Emmanuel, God is with us. Emmanuel, God is with us. When you look at Isaiah chapter 63, verse 9.

Isaiah chapter 63, verse 9. Very powerful scripture. It says that in all the afflictions, he was afflicted. Whilst the people were suffering, God was also, it's like he suffered with them.

In all the affliction, he was afflicted. And the angel of his presence saved them. In his love and in his pity, he redeemed them, and he bore them and carried them all the days of old.

[ 21 : 41 ] In all the affliction, he was afflicted. It's like whatever they were going through, he was going through it with them. Psalm 23 said, yeah, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil.

Why? Because thou art with me. Where? In the valley of the shadow. God is with us. The truth is that in the reality of suffering, God is with us. Hallelujah. And when Saul was breathing madros threats, Acts chapter 9, from verse 1, against the church.

Bible says that he didn't know that when he was breathing the threats against the church, arresting them, he was doing it against Christ. So in verse 5, it says that Christ, Christ messes him. He said, why are you persecuting me?

What? Who is this me? Who is this me? It's the church. He is so much with us that even in the reality of our suffering, he is with us. He is with us in a sister, brother.

I don't know what you might be going through, but I believe that whatever you are going through, God is with you in the reality of the suffering. Suffering is real. Suffering is real. We are human beings.

[ 22 : 39 ] We go through what others go through, but the good news is that God is with us. And listen, we don't have to understand the suffering. We don't have to know why I'm even, why am I going through this?

Why is this? Sometimes we don't have to know why because sometimes you just don't even know explanation, no justification. But guess what? It is necessary to know who is with you. Hallelujah. Hallelujah.

Paul said, tonight, the angel of God, whose I am and whom I serve, Acts chapter 27, verse 23 or so, said, the God, whose I am and whom I serve, stood by me tonight.

So you know that three Hebrew boys in Nebuchadnezzar's fire, chapter 3 of Daniel said, Nebuchadnezzar, we want you to know that we will not bow.

Even if our God whom we serve is our God, he is with us. And the book of Nebuchadnezzar said, we threw three men into the fire. I can see the fourth man. Now, the point I'm trying to make is that God is with you.

[ 23 : 40 ] God is with you. My brother, my sister, the heat is great. Fiery trial. You might be going through fiery fairness, but it says that God is with us even in the fire.

God does the, these are things that we have to know about Christian suffering. God is with us even in the fire. In Hebrews chapter 4, verse 15, it talks about how we do not have a high priest who cannot be touched by the feelings of our infirmities.

But he was like us, tempted like us at every point, yet without sin. So he's really like us. And the Bible says he's touched with what we are going through, the feelings of our infirmity.

He's with us. He is with us. But why won't he do something about it? Because, as I said, suffering has a purpose. Suffering has a purpose. Why do we go through suffering?

Why? I actually taught why Christians suffer. But just to throw a bit more light on it. We go through suffering because we live in a falling world. The world is falling. And so when you see disaster, you see this, it's part of the, it's just, global warming is part of the falling world.

[ 24 : 53 ] Disasters and earthquakes and fighters. Look at what he's learned. Look at the First World War. Thousands of people died without any proper reason. The Second World War. Millions of people.

Look at people like Stalin. Look at Mussolini. Benito. People are wicked. I mean, we live in a falling world. And now, there's a lot of unfairness and injustice going on.

Parents, when our children ask us, why is this like this? Why are things going on like this? We have to be able to let them know that we are living in a falling world. But there's a day coming. There's a day coming. God is going to see us through it.

And there's a day coming where we are going to live in a glorious state with Jesus. Hallelujah. And so, we go through suffering because we live in a falling world. And Christians also go through suffering simply because the truth is that we are not of this world.

We just are not of this world because we belong to Christ. And because we belong to Christ. And I think John chapter 15. John chapter 15.

[ 25 : 57 ] It talks about how John 15. Let me read from verse 18. It said, If the world hates you, you know that it hated me before it hated you. What? If you were of the world, the world would love its own.

But because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hates you. Remember the word which I said unto you.

The servant is not greater than his Lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you. If they have kept my sayings, they will keep your sayings also.

But if they didn't keep my sayings, they will keep what you're saying. If they persecuted me, Jesus went through it. So, we live in a world. The reason why Christians also suffer persecutions, and I'm talking about suffering for Christ, is because we live in a falling world, number two, because we identify with Christ.

And the world hates Christ. The world hates. We are not of the world. We are of Christ. So, we are not, the Bible says the world will love its own, but we don't belong to the world. And then the third reason why we suffer is purification.

[ 27 : 00 ] Purification. It perfects us. In chapter 1, verse 6 of 1 Peter, it talks about the trial of our faith. As we go through the trial, it is actually, it's more precious than gold or silver that perishes.

It will be found unto praise. So, when we go on, we go down through the study, you find out that judgment will come. God starts purifying the church from inside. So, purification is an act of purification.

Sometimes we go through some things, and God is using that to qualify us to purify. Even Jesus, who was the son of God. The Bible says, though he was a son, he learned obedience through the things he suffered.

He was made perfect through suffering. So, suffering is a major part of a human work with God. Praise God. So, now, God is with us in the reality.

God is there in the reality of our suffering. And then, suffering, the last point I want to make about suffering, what the things we have to know. So, number one, suffering is real. Number two, it comes in all kinds and all shapes.

[ 28 : 09 ] Number three, it's inevitably limited. Suffering is limited. It doesn't go on. Number four, God is there in the reality of suffering. And number five, suffering in itself does not guarantee a deeper relationship with God.

The fact that you are suffering doesn't mean it's going to produce a deeper relationship with God. In Hebrews 12, verse 11, it says that, Now, no chastening for the present seems to be joyous, but grievous.

Nevertheless, afterwards, it yields peaceable fruits of righteousness, unto them which are exercised in it. Those who use it well and go through it well.

It ends up bringing fruitful results, closeness to God. But some will go through the suffering and it will not produce that. So, suffering doesn't, by just the mere fact that you are suffering doesn't mean you are getting closer to Christ.

But your attitude towards the suffering and your focus on God and trusting in God is what can even strengthen your relationship with God. There are people who go through suffering and they say, no, you know what? They are all time low in their walk with Christ.

[ 29 : 16 ] Praise God. So, these are things that we definitely have to understand. Trials come to improve and prove us. It will prove you and improve you. It's proving what your claims are, whether your claims are really genuine, you know, how, where your level, and it will improve you.

That's the purpose, some of the purposes of trials. Let's go back to the text, foundational text. It says that, thank you, Jesus. Verse 12.

Don't think it's strange that concerning the fiery trial, which is to try you. And some of the things we have to understand is that it says fiery trial. Okay.

So, fiery trial talks about this fairness or it's fire of purification. When you read Proverbs chapter 27, verse 21, it talks about how silver is purified, how gold is purified.

Psalms 66, verse 10. Psalm 66, verse 10 talks about the purifying of gold, purifying of silver. And I like reading Isaiah. Isaiah chapter 48, verse 10.

[ 30 : 21 ] Let me read it. Isaiah chapter 48, verse. Isaiah 48, verse 10 says that, behold, I have refined thee, but not with silver.

I have chosen thee in the fairness of affliction. So, fiery trials coming to us is a purifying process. The way, so in 1 Peter chapter 1 talks about, when we go through various trials, we should know that our faith, the trial of our faith, which is more precious than gold that perishes.

So, gold is tried through fairness, as we saw in Proverbs and we saw in Psalm 66, verse 10. And actually, I would like to read Zechariah.

Zechariah chapter 13, verse 9. It says that, I will bring the third part through the fire and will refine them as silver is refined.

And I will try them as gold is tried. Wow. They shall call on my name and I will hear them. I will say, it is my people. And they shall say, the Lord is my God.

[ 31 : 30 ] Why? He said, these are people, they are my people, but I will bring them. I will bring them, I will bring the third part through the fire and will refine them as silver is refined.

In Malachi, that's the last book of the Old Testament, chapter 3, verse 2, it says that, but who may abide the day of his coming and who shall stand in his appearance?

For he is like a refined fire. Wow. Like foolish soap. That's a serious one. And he shall sit as a refiner and a purifier of gold.

And he shall purify the sons of Levi and purge them as gold and silver that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness. God is a God who will purge us.

He will purify us. He will prune us. He will take us through the process. So, brother, maybe you are going through a process. God is using, God uses suffering, challenges, trials to purify us.

[ 32 : 31 ] God is using us. So, don't, the point, I think it's very strong here. When he says that, don't consider it like something strange is happening to you. Nothing strange is happening to you when you're a Christian and you are going through persecution or you are going through trials or suffering.

Don't think it's nothing strange. So, don't be surprised by suffering. Don't be surprised by suffering. Don't be surprised by Christian. It's said it so clear.

Let me read it again. Verse 12. It says that, beloved, think it's not strange concerning the fiery trial, which is to try you. Scholars say the fiery trial in one way is, I believe, is a refining process.

But, on the other hand, Peter was writing at a time when the Christians were going through persecution. Those days, Nero, the emperor, decided to, he wanted to refurbish Rome. So, he set it ablaze. Rome was burning. And the soldiers tried to put it out. When people tried to put it out, soldiers stopped them from putting it out. And they were setting the fire more to burn.

[ 33 : 37 ] But emperor, they said, it's not him. So, there was a public outcry, an uproar against him. And he has to find, I have to be, I have to say it's not me.

So, what did he do? He said, it's the Christians. Because Christians were already public enemies. They didn't like them. So, he says, it's the Christians. And so, people turned their anger against the Christians. Christians were being killed.

He took advantage and set some of them ablaze. They were burning as torches in his garden for barbecue, for his parties. So, Christians were being torches.

And most of them were being set on fire to burn alive. And he said, this is a fiery trial. Fiery trial. Don't be afraid. Don't think something strange is happening to you. Because you are doing it for Christ.

You are suffering because you are a Christian. That's the caveat. It's very important. Now, watch this. It says that, beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial, which is to try you, as though something strange happened to you.

[ 34 : 33 ] It's not strange. It's not strange. You expect it. It's just, but if Jesus went through suffering and you are following Jesus, then you also suffer for following Jesus.

If in the way he was rejected, you'd be rejected. If he was loved and scorned, you'd be scorned. If he was scorched, you'd be scorched. And so, then it goes on to talk about the suffering.

When you read the, I like this. In Romans chapter 8, it talks about, I think I should read it. Romans chapter 8, all in line with suffering of the Christian.

Watch this. Romans chapter 8, verse 17 said, If children, then he is. If he is. If he is. If he is. Then he joins us with Christ. If so be that we suffer with him. You are Christian. Expect to suffer.

It's normal. Suffering is normal for the Christian. If so be we suffer with him, that we may also be.

[ 35 : 33 ] Suffering is not the end. The end is glory. Hallelujah. That will also be glorified within verse 18. For I reckon that the suffering of this present time.

So, watch this. He said, I reckon the suffering of this present time. That means that you should be suffering. This is not compared. It's not worthy to be compared to the glory that you follow.

So, when you are a Christian, expect to suffer. Expect to suffer persecution, rejection, marginalization. Expect to suffer. Stand taking a stand against him. Expect to suffer going through righteousness.

Or trying to practice righteousness. There are. Listen, brothers and sisters. The Christian life is hard. It's hard. I believe someone agrees with me.

Oh, when you become a Christian, everything will be cool. No, no, no, no, no, no, no, no. When you become a Christian, it's actually things can be harder in the flesh.

[ 36 : 30 ] But guess what? There is this joyous spirit. That's the next point. Hallelujah. The Christian life. In Philippians chapter 3 verse 10, it says that, I want to know him and the fellowship of his suffering.

The power of his resurrection. The fellowship of his suffering. Being made conformable to his death. The fellowship of his suffering. It's part and parcel of our walk with Christ.

Part and parcel of it. In Philippians, I think, chapter 2 verse 17, it talks about how I'm being poured out. Philippians chapter 2 verse 17 is a very powerful scripture.

I'm being poured out as a drink offering. His life. His life was finished. Getting finished is from inside him. It was. He was being poured out. He says that, yeah.

If I be offered upon the sacrifice and the service of your faith. I'm being offered upon the service and the sacrifice. I'm being poured out so that you will do well in faith.

[ 37 : 31 ] You will do. That's the minister. So the minister whose focus is all what people do for him. What is getting from people. You are out of order. It's more about what your life being poured out.

Poured out. Oh, it's me if I preach not the gospel. And so look at this. Let me just move on because of my time. It says that, so don't think it's strange.

Something strange happened to you. But look at verse 13. But, but rejoice. Can you imagine when you are going through the service? You should rejoice. Matthew chapter 5 verse 10, 11 and 12. It talks about blessed are you when men shall revile you and persecute you and say all manner of

things.

Let me read it. Matthew chapter 5 verse 10. It says that blessed are they that are persecuted for righteousness sake. For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, persecute you and persecute you and shall say all manner of evil against you.

For your sins are they that are true falsely. That's a very important one. Okay. What they are saying shouldn't be true. Falsely. Oh, man. For my sake. Rejoice. What should you do?

[ 38 : 47 ] Rejoice. When you are going through, when they are persecuting you, we should rejoice. Rejoice in persecution. Rejoicing in suffering. How to rejoice in suffering has to do with don't see it as a strange thing.

How do you rejoice in suffering? How do you take suffering? How do you handle suffering successfully as a Christian? How do you manage suffering? Have this mindset that suffering is not strange.

And then number two is that rejoice. So don't be scared. In other words, suffering is not a surprise. We should not be surprised by suffering and we shouldn't be scared by suffering.

Don't be scared. Rather, rejoice. Rejoice. Rejoice because you are suffering for Christ. Rejoice. What I was just reading, Philippians 2, verse 17. Paul said, yes, if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy and rejoice with you all.

I joy and rejoice with you all. Acts chapter 5, verse 41. After they were beaten, when they were let go, they went rejoicing that they have been counted worthy to suffer for the name of Christ.

[ 39 : 58 ] Can you imagine? They are rejoicing. Genuine Christian heart and Christian encounters rejoices in the presence of suffering. You might cry, but our heart rejoices.

Paul said, I'm rejoicing for suffering for you. I rejoice for suffering for you. In Romans chapter 5, verse 2 and 3, it says, Romans 5, 2 and 3.

It said, by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

Watch this. Not only so, we don't only rejoice in hope, but we glory in tribulation. Tribulation is trials, sufferings. We glory in it.

We are rejoicing and glorying in tribulation. Knowing. Why? It says, we glory in it, knowing that tribulation is working patience. In James chapter 1, verse 2, it says that, count it all joy when you fall into diverse trials.

[ 41 : 03 ] What? What? Count it joy. So, there is the Christian's interpretation of joy. You see, don't throw your suffering away, but throw your joy, your attitude into your suffering.

Throw it into your suffering. Throw it at your suffering. Have an attitude, a godly attitude towards the suffering that the enemy is bringing against you because of your stance in Christ. That is a very important point for his name's sake.

All right. So, they rejoice for suffering. And he says that, first Peter back, he said, verse 13, but rejoice in as much as ye are, oh, that's a good word, partakers of Christ's suffering.

Can you imagine? When I'm going through something for the name of Christ, he said, automatically I've connected myself to the suffering of Christ. So, it is not my suffering, but it's Christ's suffering I'm sharing in.

Hallelujah. When you suffer for the sake of Christ, you are actually participating. You are partaking. You are a stakeholder. You are a shareholder. You are a bona fide partner in the sufferings of Christ because the sufferings of Christ, the end of it is glory.

[ 42 : 20 ] He suffered and was glorified. So, it's right here. It says that rejoice. That should be the reason for our rejoicing. The reason for our rejoicing is not the pain, but the reason for our rejoicing is that because we are actually, Christ is, we are handing over the suffering.

Let me put it this way. Christ is owning the suffering. So, if Christ owns the suffering, it's not personal. It's not personal. If he has to get involved and deal with that soul of tassel, he will do it. He will deal with him. Because he says, so, so, why do you persecute me? So, as soon as we suffer for his name and we are handling, doing it because we belong to him, he owns it.

And that's why we rejoice. That was, we are partakers. The suffering is for him and we are just sharing in his suffering. So, it's no more our suffering, it's his suffering and we are sharing in it. And because we are sharing in his suffering, the suffering of Christ, that when his glory shall be revealed, ye also be glad with exceeding joy.

Wow. When his glory, there's a time coming his glory will be revealed. When you read 1 Peter very carefully, you see that it talks about the revelation of Christ. 1 Peter 1, verse 5.

[ 43 : 29 ] It talks about how, in spite of all we go through, it says, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed.

There's salvation ready to be revealed. When you read verse 13 of chapter 1, it says that, Wherefore, get up the loins of your mind, be sober and hope to the end, to the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Christ.

There's revelation of salvation, revelation of Christ coming. And he says that when we go through suffering, there's glory that shall be revealed and we are going to be part of the glory. That is why Romans says that if we share in his suffering, we shall also share, we are joint heirs with him.

We are sharing his suffering so that we can be joint heirs with his glory, in his glory. Hallelujah.

Praise God. And so, it says that the glory will be revealed.

We will be glad with exceeding joy. We shall be glad with exceeding joy. And verse 6 talks, chapter 1, verse 6 talks about great rejoicing. Chapter 1, verse 8 talks about joy unspeakable.

[ 44 : 39 ] Here, it said exceeding joy. You see, this is a letter written to Christians going through suffering. And yet, you can see there is still joy, joy, joy, joy.

It said you rejoice with joy unspeakable. When Christ comes, we will be glad with exceeding overflowing joy. That is why he told the apostles that rejoice when they persecute you for my name. Matthew, chapter 5, verse 10, downwards. Then, verse 12, it says that rejoice or be exceedingly glad because great is your reward. There is a reward coming. There is a reward coming.

And our sufferings will not be in vain. That's why you shouldn't be scared of suffering. But look at this. It says that, verse 14, if ye be reproached. Oh, I've come across another word here.

If ye be reproached. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye.

[ 45 : 40 ] In other words, chapter 3, verse 14 also says that happy are ye. Chapter 4, verse 14 says happy are ye. Chapter 3, verse 14. Other versions say blessed are you.

Happy. You are blessed if you suffer for Christ. Here it says that if you are reproached. So what does it mean to be reproached? To be put to shame. I read Matthew. It looks like Matthew is really featuring today.

Matthew, chapter 5. That same Matthew, chapter 5. I would gladly like to read it. Matthew, chapter 5, verse 11. Watch this text. It says that blessed are ye.

Blessed are ye. He said if you are reproached, you are blessed. Here it said blessed are ye when many shall revile you and persecute you and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely. You are blessed. There it says that if you are reproached, you are blessed.

They are putting you to shame, but you are blessed. In Luke, chapter 6, verse 22. Luke, chapter 6, verse 22. It says blessed are ye when men shall hate you and when they shall separate you from their company.

[ 46 : 47 ] Have you faced that? Yeah. Sometimes you feel you are marginalized even in your family. You are marginalized amongst your colleagues at work because you are Christian.

It's there. It's in your Bible. Just that, you know, because suffering has been separated from Christianity. A lot of Christians don't know what to do when suffering comes.

And they think God has forsaken them. Say, where is God when he hurts? Where are you, God?

No. Suffering is just part of Christianity. It's normal. It's a standard procedure. But God will give us strength and grace to go through that for his glory.

Now, it says that blessed are ye when men shall hate you and when they shall separate you from their company. Really? And shall reproach you and cast out your name as evil for the son of man's sake.

Say you are blessed. You are blessed. Someone say I'm blessed. In Hebrews chapter 13, verse 13. Hebrews 13, 13.

[ 47 : 53 ] I think you should like this one. It says that let us go therefore unto him without a camp, bearing his reproach. Remember, it says that blessed are you if you are reproached.

It said if you are reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye, blessed are ye. Here, it says let us go to Christ outside of the camp. It says let us go therefore unto him outside of the camp or without a camp, bearing his reproach.

When you are a Christian, be ready to bear his reproach. What is reproach? It's like you are being put to shame. They are trying to disgrace you, humiliate you, castigate you.

Let go to him. He is not within those camps. But he is outside the camp of the community, the camp of those people who you thought were your friends, but don't like you anymore because you are a Christian.

They just hate you. Your work colleagues, they just exclude you. They marginalize you. Yeah, Jesus is not there. He is outside the camp. Let us go to him outside the camp, bearing his reproach. [ 48 : 57 ] Let's bear his reproach. Let us go to him outside the camp, bearing his reproach. Not our reproach, but his reproach. And when you look at chapter 11, verse 20, 26, Hebrew chapter 11, verse 26, says that this is talking about Moses.

Verse 25, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God. People of God are always suffering affliction. Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God rather than enjoying the pleasures of sin for a season.

It is for a season. It is for a season. Sin is for a season. Don't enjoy it. It will go and then leave you with a debt you might not be able to pay. Or suffering. There's a certain type of suffering that is not meant for Christians.

And you have to choose your suffering. I probably mentioned it just in closing. And watch this. It says that, esteeming the reproach of Christ. Moses. This is Moses. What was Christ doing in the mind of Moses?

Moses, 2,000 years before Christ. He chose to suffer affliction with the people of God. Esteeming the reproach of Christ.

[ 50 : 01 ] It's in your Bible. Esteeming the reproach of Christ. The Bible says that, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt. So, even Moses, he took the reproach of Christ, embraced it, thinking that this is better.

It's better than the treasures of Egypt. Better. Let them put me to shame. Let them humiliate me. Let them disdain me. Treat me anyhow. It's better than the treasures of Egypt.

The reproach of Christ. Moses. So, he said, let us go to him outside the camp bearing his reproach. So, back to the point. He says that if you are reproached, 1 Peter. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye.

For the spirit of glory and of God rest on you. On their part, he is evil spoken of. But on your part, he is glorified. He rests on you. The spirit of glory.

In your lifetime. As you go through the pain for Christ. The spirit of glory. It says that. That's a serious one. It says that happy are you. Why are you happy?

[ 51 : 06 ] For the spirit of glory and of God rest upon you. It's the same. The word rest. There is the same word that Jesus said. Come unto me and I'll give you rest. It is settling on you.

The spirit of glory settles on you. The spirit of God rests on you. So, while they are speaking evil of him. They can't deny that God is being glorified in your life. They see your outcome. They see the things that are happening in your life.

And just like he says that. In chapter 2 verse 12. They see your callous life. The callous. Their excellent life. And the Bible says that. Chapter 2 verse 12 again. That was so pivotal in this.

Peter. Having your conversation. Honest among the Gentiles. That whereas they speak against you as evil doer. They may be by your good words. Which they behold glorify God.

So, your work. The way you have been handling suffering. Makes people feel wow. This is interesting. We all go through the same suffering. But our outcome is not the same.

[ 52 : 03 ] And our approach to suffering is different. And unbelievers look at us. They're wondering. What is it about you guys? And the way you go through. The way you're handling the suffering. I can't take it. By the way you're handling. And they glorify God in us.

Paul said. They glorify Christ in me. They glorify Galatians. They glorify Christ in me. Hallelujah. And so. It says that.

When you are reproached. The glory of Christ. Rests. On you. Let me just pick this. Again. Let me. Verse 14. If ye be reproached.

For the name of Christ. For. For. For. It's not for yourself. But you are doing. You are being reproached. For the name of Christ. That brings to mind. Second Corinthians chapter. Chapter 12. Verse. 10. Second Corinthians. We normally quote verse 9. But verse 10. It says that. Therefore. I take pleasure in. In infirmities. In reproaches. In necessities.

[ 52 : 58 ] In persecutions. In distress. For. Christ's sake. That's so important. I'm doing this. For Christ's sake. I take pleasure. In reproach. For Christ's sake. Everything you are doing.

The pain you are going through. The difficulties you are going through. It must always have. This underlying fact. That is for. For the sake of Christ. For the sake of Christ. Let's go through it. For the sake of Christ. And he says. We are blessed. We are blessed. In our next session. I'll go on to verse. Verse 15. And to show you. How. We should. Select.

And choose. Our suffering. And so now. We shouldn't be surprised. By suffering. And we shouldn't be scared. By suffering. Don't be surprised. By suffering. And don't be scared. By your suffering. Or. Expect suffering. Expect suffering. Enjoy suffering. Rejoice in suffering. Yeah. Enjoy suffering. And expect suffering. Next time when we come.

[ 53 : 54 ] I'll talk about. Evaluating our suffering. Or choosing our suffering. In Jesus name. I pray that God. Is going to strengthen us. Suffering is not strange. For the Christian.

The Christian is built. To handle suffering. Built. To handle suffering. God. Is with us. In the time of suffering. Built. To handle suffering. Suffering is not strange.

Suffering is part of the deal. And how to maximize. Your suffering. To the glory of God. In Jesus name. Amen. Thank you for listening to this message.

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